



THE AUSTRALIAN RURAL AND OUTBACK AWARDS

FARM BIOSECURITY

In April 2009, Awards Australia launched the Australian Rural and Outback Awards, focussed on recognising, acknowledging and rewarding the significant contributions made by various individuals, businesses, organisations and community groups throughout rural and outback Australia. The program has been considered a huge success and is expected to develop to be one of the most prestigious rural and outback Australian annual awards programs.

The awards recognised the achievements of rural and regional Australians through five categories: Farm Biosecurity; Business, Training & Employment; Agricultural & Rural Development; Youth Leadership; and Health & Community Service. The prizes include a share in \$10,000 donated by Traditional Credit Union and a hand crafted glass trophy for each category winner.



The Farm Biosecurity component recognises the development and implementation of risk mitigation mechanisms to help secure farms from diseases, pests and weeds, and is awarded to a high-achiever in the area of on-farm biosecurity management.

Nominations closed in July with judging taking place in August – the panel comprising of representatives from award patrons, presenters, sponsors and independent expert judges for each category. From the many nominations received for the Farm Biosecurity Award, four finalists were announced, and two winners declared at a special Gala Presentation Dinner on Saturday, 19 September at the Canberra Institute of Technology.

‘The entries for the farm biosecurity award were of an exceptional standard. From individual property owners to large organisations, all provided practical examples of what can be done to boost biosecurity,’ said judge Andrew Gordon.

‘The high calibre of entries received made the judging difficult and that was the reason for awarding prizes to two winners in this category.’





The first recipient, Swift Australia Pty Limited, won the award for its recently implemented quality assurance biosecurity program. Swift Australia employs over 7,000 people nationally and provides products to more than 50 countries across the globe. Their biosecurity program entails simple yet effective practices that made the company prominent in the enormously competitive Farm Biosecurity category. Such practices include visitor risk assessments, provision of biosecurity protective clothing, staff training and the assessment of livestock entering its properties.

Left to right - Greg Fraser (CEO Plant Health Australia) James Palfreeman (Swift Australia) and Mike Bond (CEO Animal Health Australia). Photo courtesy of Animal Health Australia.



Left to right - Mike Bond, CEO Animal Health Australia, Max Hams and David Gowing from Flockowners of Broken Hill, and Greg Fraser, CEO Plant Health Australia. Photo courtesy of Animal Health Australia.

The second award was presented to the Flockowners of Broken Hill Rural Lands Protection Board. In the late 90's, 128 flockowners in the Broken Hill area joined forces to prevent entry of Ovine Johne's Disease (OJD). To do this, a series of biosecurity initiatives were developed including the establishment of the Broken Hill OJD Committee; promotion of awareness of OJD risk and how to prevent it; and a survey of all introductions of sheep from 1988 to 1997. In 2002, the Rural Lands Protection Board introduced a Stock Register booklet to record stock movements and other property information. The work undertaken by this group is voluntary and their commitment has ensured no OJD has been found in the area.

Both organisations were presented \$2,000 as well as the magnificent trophy.

